

Message Text

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, AR, US

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR TODMAN'S MEETING WITH ARGENTINE
FOREIGN MINISTER

REF: MADRID 5483

1. THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF EVENTS BEARING ON U.S.-
ARGENTINE RELATIONS SINCE YOUR DEPARTURE:

A) LONG-TIME VIDELA CONFIDANT, GENERAL ROBERTO VIOLA, HAS
BEEN CHOSEN TO SUCCEED VIDELA AS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF
THE ARMY. VIOLA WILL ASSUME THE ARMY COMMAND ON AUGUST
1 WHEN VIDELA RESIGNS HIS COMMISSION AND IS SWORN IN AS
A CIVILIAN PRESIDENT.

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B) THE DEPARTMENT ADVISED THE EX-IM BANK THAT WE COULD
NOT RECOMMEND THE BANK PROCEED WITH FINANCING THE SALE
OF ALLIS-CHALMERS GENERATORS FOR THE YACYRETA PROJECT.
THE FOLLOWING PRESS GUIDANCE WAS PREPARED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN REGARDING THIS DECISION: QUOTE:

Q: HAS THE ADMINISTRATION CUT OFF EXPORT-IMPORT TRANS-ACTIONS WITH ARGENTINA?

A: THAT QUESTION SHOULD BE REFERRED TO EXIM. HOWEVER, I CAN TELL YOU THAT IN CONFORMANCE WITH THE STATUTORY REQUIREMENT, THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK CONSULTED WITH THE DEPARTMENT WITH RESPECT TO THE PENDING APPLICATION BY ALLIS-CHALMERS FOR ARGENTINE PROJECTS AT THIS TIME. WE RECOMMENDED TO THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK AGAINST PROCEEDING WITH THE TRANSACTION IN THE ABSENCE OF SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS IN THE ARGENTINE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION.

DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS HAVE ADVISED THEIR ARGENTINE COUNTERPARTS THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS A SINCERE DESIRE FOR IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT BUT THE PERSISTENCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS TROUBLES US DEEPLY. THESE PROBLEMS INCLUDE: NUMEROUS DETAINEES BEING HELD WITHOUT CHARGES, THE DISAPPEARANCES OF INDIVIDUALS, WHO IN PAST HAVE INCLUDED CHURCHMEN, LABOR LEADERS AND MEMBERS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS.

THE DEPARTMENT WILL CONTINUE TO REVIEW CLOSELY OUR POLICIES REGARDING ARGENTINA IN THE HOPE THAT IMPROVEMENT IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION THERE WILL ALLOW THE US GOVERNMENT TO ADOPT A MORE FORTHCOMING ATTITUDE IN THE NEAR FUTURE.
END QUOTE.
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WHEN IT BECAME PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE IN ARGENTINA THAT EX-IM WOULD NOT ISSUE A LETTER OF INTEREST, THERE WAS A VERY STRONG NEGATIVE REACTION THERE.

C) THE ARGENTINE INVITATION TO THE IAHRC, DELIVERED DURING THE OASGA, WAS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO THE IAHRC AS PRESENTED BECAUSE IT WOULD HAVE LIMITED COMMISSION CONTACTS TO ARGENTINE EXECUTIVE AND JUDICIAL OFFICIALS. THE COMMISSION HAS ATTEMPTED TO BROADEN THE SCOPE OF THE VISIT AND THE ARGENTINES ARE NOW CONSIDERING A RESPONSE TO A COMMISSION QUESTIONNAIRE.

IT HAS BECOME CLEAR THAT THERE IS MINIMUM COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE PRESIDENCY AND THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. THE PRESIDENCY IS CONTEMPLATING A GENERALLY FAVORABLE RESPONSE TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE, BUT THE NAVY-RUN MINISTRY TAKES A HARD LINE.

D) THE FOREIGN MINISTER WAS DISTRESSED THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO ARRANGE AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE SECRETARY (WHOSE SCHEDULE SIMPLY WOULD NOT PERMIT) DURING THE OASGA.

ALLARA DID SEE NEWSOM. MONTES ALSO CRITICIZED THE MEETING BETWEEN ARGENTINE POLITICIAN OSCAR ALENDE AND UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM IN LATE JUNE.

2. WE BELIEVE YOU SHOULD RESTATE TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER THAT THE U.S. SINCERELY DESIRES BETTER RELATIONS WITH ARGENTINA, BUT BEFORE WE CAN REACT POSITIVELY, THERE WILL HAVE TO BE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE ARGENTINE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION. WE HAVE TOLD THE ARGENTINES THAT WE LOOK ON THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS AS KEY TO THE SITUATION AND MOVEMENT ON ANY ONE WOULD PROVIDE A BASIS FOR US TO RESPOND FAVORABLY IN VARIOUS AREAS. (THESE ELEMENTS WERE SET OUT BY UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM WHEN HE VISITED ARGENTINA AND AGAIN WHEN HE MET WITH DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER
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ALLARA DURING THE OASGA AND HAVE BEEN REPEATED BY AMBASADOR CASTRO ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS.) THEY ARE:

A) ACCEPT A VISIT BY THE IAHRG ON TERMS ACCEPTABLE TO THE COMMISSION;

B) MOVE TO RELEASE, TRY OR GRANT RIGHT OF OPTION FOR THE APPROXIMATELY 3400 PRISONERS HELD WITHOUT CHARGE.

C) ESTABLISH A MECHANISM TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT THE FATE OF THE DISAPPEARED TO THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS.

3. YOU MAY WISH ALSO TO POINT OUT THAT TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE -- THE HUMPHREY-KENNEDY AMENDMENT'S EMBARGO OF NEW ARMS TRANSFERS TO ARGENTINA WILL TAKE EFFECT OCTOBER

1. THUS THERE IS URGENT NEED FOR SOME INITIAL MOVEMENT IN THE ARGENTINE SITUATION THAT WILL PERMIT A REVERSAL OF THE PRESENT DETERIORATING CLIMATE BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES. VANCE

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